



For Immediate Release
Tuesday, September 19, 2023

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**LDF Applauds Reintroduction of the John R. Lewis Voting Rights
Advancement Act (VRAA)**

*Nation's Oldest Civil Rights Legal Organization Says Federal Legislation to
Protect Voters is Urgently Needed*

Today, long-time lead sponsor Rep. Terri Sewell of Alabama reintroduced the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act (VRAA) in the United States House of Representatives, a piece of legislation that will strengthen voting rights for all Americans and protect voters from discrimination.

In response, LDF President and Director-Counsel Janai Nelson issued the following statement:

“We applaud the reintroduction of the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act: a vital piece of legislation that, bearing the name of one of the greatest civil rights heroes and voting rights champions in our nation’s history, will safeguard the fundamental right to vote by strengthening and restoring the Voting Rights Act (VRA) — the most impactful civil rights law in our nation’s history.

“The VRAA is needed as much now as ever before — a full decade after the Supreme Court’s decision in *Shelby v. Holder* decimated the heart of the Voting Rights Act by gutting the preclearance protection.

“*Since Shelby*, and later *Brnovich v. DNC*, which made it even harder to challenge discriminatory voting laws, states have continued to limit access to the ballot and used the redistricting process to dilute Black voters’ voices. These attacks are especially acute in states where preclearance protected voters of color prior to *Shelby* and have exploded since 2020 as part of a backlash against Black voter turnout. These formerly protected

states include Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Texas — all places where LDF has been forced to bring recent litigation.

“LDF is proud to be leading and winning *Allen v. Milligan* at the Supreme Court and beyond. But a fully restored Voting Rights Act would protect even more Black voters without the need to expend significant resources on lengthy, onerous litigation, and without compromising their right to vote in the first place. Nothing underscores the ongoing need for a strong, modernized VRA as much as Alabama’s unabashed defiance of federal courts directing the state to enact non-discriminatory voting maps.

“The VRAA will provide voters with necessary tools to address discriminatory voting practices and protect all Americans’ equal access to the ballot box. Among other key provisions, the VRAA will restore the preclearance process, ensuring that jurisdictions with a recent history of voting rights violations are required to obtain approval for changes to voting practices and procedures before they go into effect.

“The Voting Rights Act has enjoyed overwhelming bipartisan support since its enactment, including through its consistent bipartisan reauthorization five times, the most recent in 2006 with unanimous support in the U.S. Senate.

“We urge all members of Congress to fulfill their obligations to the U.S. Constitution by passing legislation that will fully restore and strengthen the Voting Rights Act. Today’s Congress is compelled to cast politics aside and protect our democracy against voter discrimination and election subversion by enacting the VRAA.”

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Founded in 1940, the [Legal Defense Fund](#) (LDF) is the nation’s first civil rights law organization. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights.